

# Final Assessment Report

## Social Development Studies (BA)

### August 2018

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#### **Summary of the Program Review**

In accordance with the University Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), this final assessment report provides a synthesis of the external evaluation and the internal response and assessments of the BA program delivered by the Department of Social Development Studies (SDS). A self-study (Volume I) was submitted to the Associate Vice-President, Academic on June 30, 2016. The self-study presented the program descriptions and learning outcomes, an analytical assessment of this program, and program data including the data collected from a student survey along with the standard data package prepared by the Office of Institutional Analysis & Planning (IAP). Appended were the course outlines for all courses in the program and the CVs (Volume II) for each full-time faculty member in the Department.

Two arm's-length external reviewers (Volume III), (Dr. Lynne Phillips, Dean of Arts, Memorial University and Dr. Pamela Wakewich, Professor of Sociology, Lakehead University) were ranked and selected by the Associate Vice-President, Academic. In addition, one internal reviewer (Dr. Trevor Charles, Professor of Biology) was chosen.

They reviewed the self-study documentation and then conducted a site visit to the University on January 19-20, 2017. The visit included interviews with the Associate Vice-President, Academic; the President of Renison University College; two Faculty Associate Deans of Arts; Chair of the Program; Renison's Administrative Dean; Chairs of other programs at Renison; Faculty members, staff and students.

This final assessment report is based on information extracted, in many cases verbatim, from the self-study, the external reviewers' report and the program response.

#### **Program characteristics**

Social Development Studies applies an interdisciplinary approach to address the human condition in relation to social issues in local, national, and global contexts. This innovative program offers courses in human and social development including psychology, sociology, and social work. The curriculum develops skills in critical thinking, problem solving, interpersonal relations, leadership, as well as civic and global engagement. The various plans provide an

excellent foundation for graduate studies, professional programs, and careers in human and public service.

### **Summary of strengths, challenges and opportunities based on self-study**

#### **Strengths:**

- Dynamic, interdisciplinary social science program
- Housed at a residential campus which offers a true sense of community
- Faculty have diverse expertise and research interests; dedicated and efficient staff members who are enthusiastic and conscientious; most sessional lecturers are professionals from the community with rich and practical experience
- Small classroom sizes while also offering extensive online course offerings that provide flexibility and accessibility to a diverse group of students
- Survey results are favourable and show strong evidence that SDS provides quality education for students who find jobs that relate to the skills and knowledge they gained in the program

#### **Challenges:**

- Lower application numbers in the past two years
- Other institutions that offer direct entry into Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) program which would negatively affect SDS enrollment, as many SDS students do a post-degree in BSW
- Educating SDS students on other career options besides social work
- No graduate program in SDS means that it is difficult to sustain strong research output

#### **Opportunities:**

- Potential to develop an interdisciplinary Master's program in SDS
- Further enhancing quality of online course offerings
- Development of co-op stream for direct entry program
- Expansion of experiential learning for apprenticeship courses to students in their 2<sup>nd</sup> and/or 3<sup>rd</sup> year
- Enhancement of student advising

### **Summary of key findings from the external reviewers**

Interdisciplinarity is the unique strength of the program, so faculty – part-time and full-time alike – should place their energy there. It will be important to show that students graduating from Social Development Studies know that interdisciplinary study best illustrates how ‘the whole is more than the sum of its parts’ and why that’s important.

The Department has spent considerable time refining its curriculum – ensuring knowledge breadth and depth, skills and accessibility for SDS students. It has also done a good job of aligning itself with the changing curriculum expectations of the Faculty of Arts (e.g., number of required courses in a major).

The students receive training in interdisciplinary and disciplinary theory and application, which is in itself an innovative aspect of the SDS program. Students learn about the roots of three social science disciplines and then learn to see how an interdisciplinary approach to social issues produces different, additional knowledge. The Department does this within an established setting of high quality scholarship and community engagement expectations. The reviewers applaud the Department’s efforts to ensure that students learn this ‘double vision’ brand of education. It is an approach that we think should be applauded within the Faculty and the University.

### **Program response to external reviewer recommendations**

#### **Recommendations**

1. Include part-time instructors (both professional and academic) in Departmental meetings to ensure the depth and viability of the program and its curriculum.

#### **Response**

An SDS instructor group has been created on LEARN to facilitate communication. Minutes from Department meetings are posted there so they are available to part-time instructors. Depending on the willingness and availability of the sessional instructors, representatives will be invited to participate in Departmental meetings to ensure their perspectives are included in Departmental discussions and decision-making. The program will also continue annual Departmental workshops and dinners inviting all full-time and part-time instructors.

2. Explore the creation of an Interdisciplinary Master's degree with other units in Renison and beyond.

**Response**

The Academic Dean at Renison shows interest and support for the development of an MA program. A group of interested SDS faculty members and the SDS chair will work with the Dean to explore the possibility further beginning in September 2018. A report will be completed by April 2019.

3. To ensure the continuation of a high quality program and improve the ratio of full-time to part-time instructors, it is recommended that the Department be granted 2-3 additional tenure-track faculty positions.

**Response**

The department hired one new full-time tenure-track faculty member who began July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018. One additional hire is planned for a start date of July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020.

4. Establish an Associate Chair position to provide support for the Chair and to raise the profile of SDS in the Faculty of Arts and the University.

**Response**

The President and Dean have voiced their support of this initiative. The new Chair (as of July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018) has been asked to keep track of her duties from July to December 2018. In January 2019, discussions will begin within the department about how these duties would be divided between the Chair and an Associate Chair, and how an Associate Chair will be selected. A plan will then be submitted to the President and Dean for final approval. Final decision to be made by March, 2019. An Associate Chair could take up the position as early as July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019.

5. To meet expanded administrative support roles in academic advising and recruitment, it is recommended that an additional .5 to 1.0 support person be hired.

**Response**

An additional .5 administrative support person for SDS was hired in February 2018.

6. Review SDS teaching loads and supports in light of a desire for increased research productivity and higher profile for the SDS program, as well as the apparent inequity between teaching loads in Faculty of Arts and SDS.

**Response**

Renison's Academic Dean will oversee faculty workload planning and will conduct a review of relative loads and responsibilities over the 2018-2019 academic year.

7. To enable the growth of research and retain research-intensive faculty members in SDS, increase the number of course remissions available to faculty to support their research programs.

**Response**

SDS faculty with active research programs are now eligible to apply for one course remission per academic year, requiring approval of the Dean.

8. Help faculty to identify matching fund sources – [particularly for faculty applying to highly competitive tri-councils such as CIHR and SSHRC].

**Response**

This work is ongoing. Faculty review their research plans annually as part of the APR process. The recent addition of a new Academic Dean is designed to strengthen this area through focused consultation and planning with faculty about their research. Renison regularly supports applications for matching grants with faculty.

9. Explore ways to improve communication and engagement with the SDS program including formalizing an SDS/Faculty of Arts liaison person to apprise the Faculty of Arts on SDS activities.

**Response**

The Dean will continue to examine the existing lines of communication and committee memberships with an eye to improving communication and deepening engagement with Arts, in consultation with the Chair of SDS and the Dean of Arts.

10. Incorporate SDS more directly in the development of materials and process of recruitment for the SDS program. Highlight the dynamic and innovative research in SDS as a means to recruit students with higher academic aspirations.

**Response**

One of the SDS administrative staff has been named as the point person for Renison's Marketing Manager to reach out to in regards to the development of materials, and is connected with Marketing and Undergraduate Recruitment on main campus. The Dean will continue to work with Marketing and Recruitment at Renison and with the recruiters on the main campus to ensure that SDS has a strong voice and involvement in the development of materials for recruitment, and in ensuring that recruiters are well able to represent SDS and its value to potential students of outstanding caliber.

**Recommendations that were not selected for implementation**

1. Develop clear and transparent criteria for course release eligibility.

**Response**

These criteria already exist.

**Implementation Plan:**

**Social Development Studies**

	Recommendations	Proposed Follow-up	Responsibility for Leading and Resourcing	Timeline for Addressing Recommendation
1.	Include part-time instructors (both professional and academic) in departmental meetings to ensure the depth and viability of the program and its curriculum	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. SDS instructor group on Learn created to facilitate communication.</li><li>2. Minutes from department meetings posted on Learn site.</li><li>3. Representatives will be invited to participate in departmental meetings to ensure their perspectives are included in departmental discussions and decision-making.</li><li>4. Continue to hold annual departmental workshops and dinners inviting all full-time and part-time instructors.</li></ol>	SDS Chair	Immediately and ongoing

2.	Explore the creation of an Interdisciplinary Master's degree with other units in Renison and beyond.	The Academic Dean shows interest and support for the development of an MA program. A group of interested SDS faculty members and the SDS chair will work with the Dean to explore the possibility further.	SDS Chair and Renison Academic Dean, Arts Associate Dean, Graduate Studies	Feasibility report to be completed by April 2019
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**President**

	Recommendations	Proposed Follow-up	Responsibility for Leading and Resourcing	Timeline for addressing Recommendation
3.	To ensure the continuation of a high quality program and improve the ratio of full-time to part-time instructors, it is recommended that the Department be granted 2-3 additional tenure-track faculty positions	The department hired one new full-time tenure-track faculty member who began July 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2018. Another search will begin in fall 2019.	President and Renison Academic Dean	One full-time tenure track position began July 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2018; second scheduled for July 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2020
4.	Establish an Associate Chair position to provide support for the Chair and to raise the profile of SDS in the Faculty of Arts and the University.	The President and Dean are supportive of this initiative. The new Chair (as of July 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2018) has been asked to keep track of her duties from July to December 2018. In January 2019, discussions will begin within the department about how these duties would be divided between the Chair and an Associate Chair, and how an Associate Chair will be selected. The plan will be sent to the Dean and President for final approval.	Renison Academic Dean	Decision to be made by March, 2019. Associate Chair could be in place by July 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2019
5.	To meet expanded administrative support roles in academic advising and recruitment, it is recommended that an additional .5 to 1.0 support person be hired.	Hiring of one .5 administrative support person for SDS	SDS Chair	Hire complete with February 2018 start date.

6.	Review SDS teaching loads and supports in light of a desire for increased research productivity and higher profile for the SDS program, as well as the apparent inequity between teaching loads in Faculty of Arts and SDS.	The Dean will oversee faculty workload planning and will conduct a review of relative loads and responsibilities.	Renison Academic Dean	Review to be completed by July 2019
7.	To enable the growth of research and retain research-intensive faculty members in SDS, increase the number of course remissions available to faculty to support their research programs.	Renison faculty with active research programs are now eligible to apply for one course remission per academic year, requiring approval of the Dean.	President and Renison Academic Dean	Ongoing; course remission policy to be reviewed in Fall 2018
8.	Help faculty to identify matching fund sources – particularly for faculty applying to highly competitive tri-councils such as CIHR and SSHRC].	Renison regularly supports grant applications which involve matching funds. The new Dean will specifically tend this piece of faculty interest as part of his annual planning with them.	Renison Academic Dean	Ongoing

## Renison Academic Dean

	Recommendations	Proposed Follow-up	Responsibility for Leading and Resourcing	Timeline for addressing Recommendation
9.	Explore ways to improve communication and engagement with the SDS program including formalizing an SDS/Faculty of Arts liaison person to apprise the Faculty of Arts on SDS activities.	The Dean will examine the existing lines of communication and committee memberships with an eye to improving communication and deepening engagement with Arts, in consultation with the Chair of SDS and the Dean of Arts.	Renison Academic Dean, and Arts Associate Dean, Undergraduate Studies	Ongoing
10.	Incorporate SDS more directly in the development of materials and process of recruitment for the SDS program. Highlight the dynamic and innovative research in SDS as a means to recruit students with higher academic aspirations.	An SDS administrative staff has been named as the point person for Renison's Marketing Manager to reach out to in regards to the development of materials, and is connected with Marketing and Undergraduate Recruitment on main campus. The Dean will work with Renison Marketing and Recruitment, and with recruiters on the main campus, to ensure that SDS has a strong voice in the development of materials for recruitment.	Renison Academic Dean, SDS Chair, and Manager of Marketing and Recruitment	Ongoing. Further discussion will be undertaken during the fall 2018 term as recruitment for 2019 gets underway.

The Department Chair/Director, in consultation with the Dean of the Faculty shall be responsible for monitoring the Implementation Plan.



Date of next program review: \_\_\_\_\_ 2024  
Date

Signatures of Approval:

Dorise Mangold Aug 11 / 2018  
Chair/Director Date

Bob Boychuk Aug 1, 2018  
AFIW Academic Dean/Head (For AFIW programs only) Date

[Signature] 27/08/18  
Faculty Dean\* Date

[Signature] August 16, 2018  
Associate Vice-President, Academic Date  
(For undergraduate and augmented programs)

Associate Vice-President, Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs Date  
(For graduate and augmented programs)

\*Note: that this AFIW program falls under the Faculty of ARTS; however, the Dean does not have fiscal control nor authority over staffing and administration of this program.